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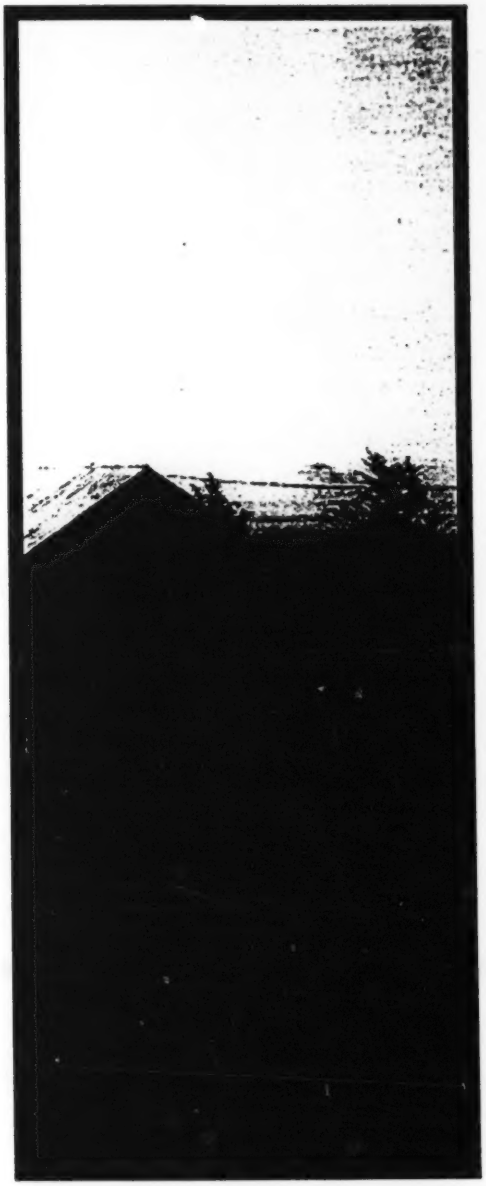
ABSTRACT

Allegany Community College in Cumberland, Maryland, conducted an employer assessment survey of Somerset County businesses during the winter of 1995 in order to provide evaluation data for planning and curriculum development for the secondary and postsecondary educational institutions. The survey was mailed to 760 establishments, with a 29 percent return. Some of the major findings of the survey are the following: (1) Somerset County establishments rate themselves highly in each of nine areas of business performance, with quality control and management and labor relations rated highest and technology, marketing and sales, and diversification rated lowest--but still above average; (2) manufacturers in the county rated themselves lower in business performance than manufacturers in either West Virginia or Bedford County, Pennsylvania; (3) 9 of 10 businesses use informal on-the-job training, whereas 6 of 10 use formal in-company programs and less than 5 percent of respondents used high school, technical or community, or four-year colleges for worker education and training; (4) at least half of workers use computers at least once per week; (5) employers spend an average of $200 on employee training; (6) workers in the county need additional education and training, particularly in the areas of communication, computers, leadership, and management; (7) most employers want college-level educational opportunities, particularly in computer and information sciences, business management and marketing, and distribution, for their employees; (8) although employers think that employees could benefit from training, they maintain a generally positive view of work force quality; (9) most hiring is done through word of mouth, followed by local newspaper advertisements and employment agencies; (10) less than one in five respondents reported having received assistance from a public or nonprofit organization during the the assistance from a public or nonprofit organization during the last 2 years, with about three of five of assisted firms receiving work force training; (11) employers rated the quality of Somerset County schools as good; and (12) recognition of Allegany Community College and the Somerset Area Vocational Technical School is high, with most employers familiar with these institutions rating their performance as "excellent" or "good." (The report contains 13 tables, five figures, and the survey instrument.) (KC)

ED 392 993

Somerset County Employer Needs Assessment



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Somerset County Employer Needs Assessment

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April 1996

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Allegany Community College, in cooperation with the Somerset Area Vocational-Technical School, conducted an employer assessment survey of Somerset County establishments during the winter of 1995. The purpose of this study was to provide evaluation data for planning and curriculum development at the secondary and post-secondary school levels. The survey was mailed to 760 establishments and returned by twenty-nine percent of them, after accounting for non-delivered mail and defunct enterprises. The major findings of this survey are summarized below:

- SomersetCounty establishments rate themselves highly in each of nine areas of business performance. Quality control was viewed as the biggest strength followed by management and labor relations. Rated lowest (but still above the industry average) were technology, marketing/sales, and diversification.

- Somerset County manufacturers generally rated themselves lower in business performance areas than manufacturers in either West Virginia or Bedford County, Pennsylvania.

- When training workers, nearly nine out of ten establishments use informal on-the-job training, and six out of ten use formal in-company programs. Employers were more likely to use the local educational system for upgrading worker skills than the federal government. However, less than five percent of the respondents indicated that they used high school, technical or community colleges, or four year colleges or universities on a regular basis for worker education and training.

- For the average employer, one-half of its workers use a computer at least once a week.

- Somerset County employers spend an average of $200 per employee on training each year.

- County workers are in need of additional education and training, particularly in the areas of communication, computers, leadership, and management. There is less need for remedial education in math or reading and writing and less demand for more specialized technical or business training.

- Most employers want college-level educational opportunities for their workers in the region. Programs in the areas of computer and information sciences, business management, and marketing and distribution were identified most

often. Many firms also identified a need for instructional programs in mechanics and repair, law and legal studies, construction trades, engineering, and health profession fields.

- Although respondents believe that many workers could benefit from additional school preparation, they retain a generally favorable view of workforce quality. Workers are regarded as reliable and loyal. They have good work skills and are trainable.

- Somerset County employers rely on word of mouth for most employee recruiting. Local newspaper advertising is used by over half of the respondents. Public and private employment agencies are also popular. Almost one out of five firms recruits employees from local educational institutions, and most offer opportunities for students to work part-time during the summer.

- Less than one in five of the respondents reported having received assistance from a public or non-profit organization during the last two years. About three in five of these assisted firms received workforce training.

- Employers rated the quality of Somerset County schools as good. The highest marks went to the kindergartens/preschools and primary schools. Secondary schools received somewhat lower evaluations than the other categories.

- Recognition of Allegany Community College and the Somerset Area Vocational Technical School is high. The lion's share of employers familiar with these institutions rated their performance as "excellent" or "good."

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1.0 Introduction and Research Design

This study was conducted to provide evaluation data for planning and curriculum development at the secondary and post-secondary school levels in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. By questioning County employers about employee qualities and qualifications, workforce educational needs, and curriculum preferences, survey organizers hoped to gain a better understanding of the performance of local educational institutions and identify new curriculum needs. The project was a joint effort of Allegany Community College which operates an expanding branch center in Somerset County and the Somerset Area Vocational Technical School.

The instrument used in this survey is based on a similar survey conducted for Bedford County (Rephann, 1995). The questionnaire is included in Appendix A. Part A of the questionnaire asks employers to provide general information about their establishments, such as size, age, industry, and perceived business strengths. Part B solicits information about workforce characteristics. Employers are asked about their methods of training, levels of investment in training, employee educational achievement levels, and employee qualities. Part C asks employers to assess their need for education and training in fifteen different training areas. In part D, firms are invited to describe their employee recruitment activities and difficulties encountered in recruiting qualified applicants in several occupational categories. Part E allows firms to evaluate the quality of schools in Somerset County and to suggest programs or activities that should be introduced in local schools.

The survey was mailed to 760 businesses and government or non-profit agencies in the county. This list was obtained from the Somerset Chamber of Commerce. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 1,847 establishments operating in Somerset County in 1992 (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1994). Therefore, the address list assembled for this survey covers only a small portion of the firms operating in the County. One potential bias may be introduced by the sampling method used here. Because sample employers participate in networks which convey information about competitive business practices, they are more likely to innovate and exhibit more "progressive" attitudes concerning human resource development.

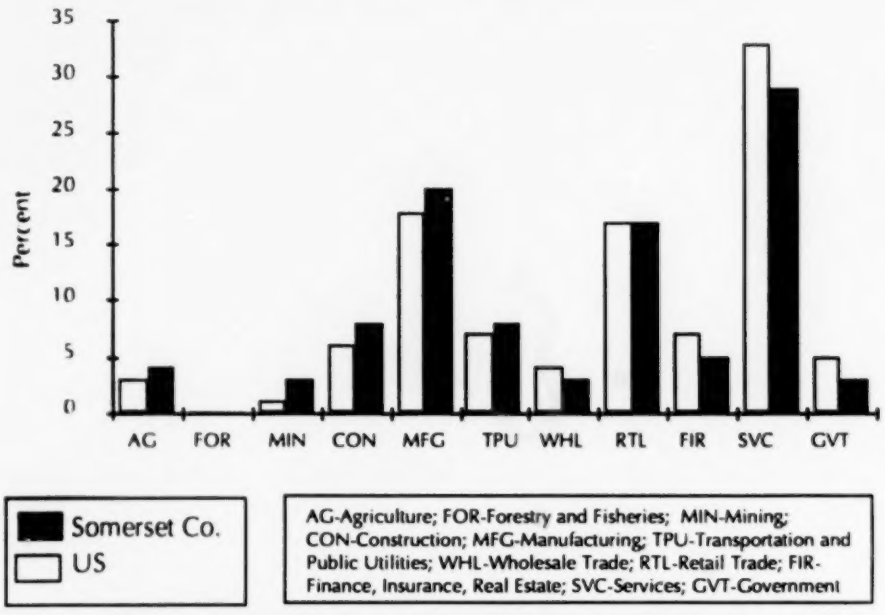
In November of 1995, the 760 firms on the survey address list were sent a packet which contained a survey instrument, an addressed and postage-paid envelope, and a cover letter. The cover letter is exhibited in Appendix A. Two weeks after the initial mailing, a post-card reminder was sent to non-respondents. This was followed by a third mailing to non-respondents four weeks after the initial mailing which contained a cover letter, questionnaire and addressed, postage-paid envelope. Of the firms surveyed, 218 had returned usable questionnaires by the closing date in late January. Two addresses were defunct or the mail could not be forwarded. Therefore, the

response rate of the survey was 218/758= 29 percent. Ordinarily, mail surveys of this type elicit response rates in the twenty-five to thirty-five percent range. Therefore, the response rate for this survey was typical.

2.0 The Somerset County Economy

Somerset County is a predominantly rural county—over eighty percent of its population resides in areas with less than 2,500 residents. Compared to the United States taken as a whole, it is relatively specialized in basic sectors such as agriculture, mining, construction, and manufacturing (see figure 2.1) and under-represented in trade and private and public services. As a result of economic difficulties during the 1980s, per-capita income is now only eighty percent of the national level. This is better than five years ago but worse than the late 1970s when PCI exceeded ninety percent of U.S. per-capita income.

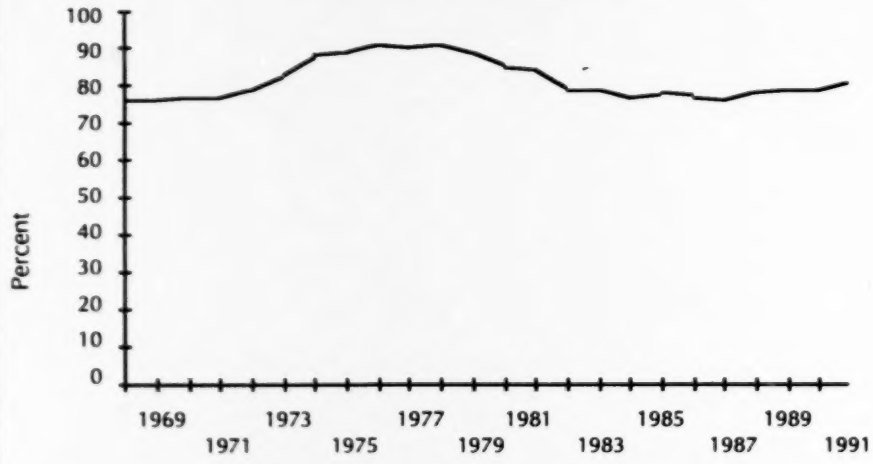
Figure 2.1 Industry Profile, 1992
Somerset County versus U.S. Employment



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1994b.

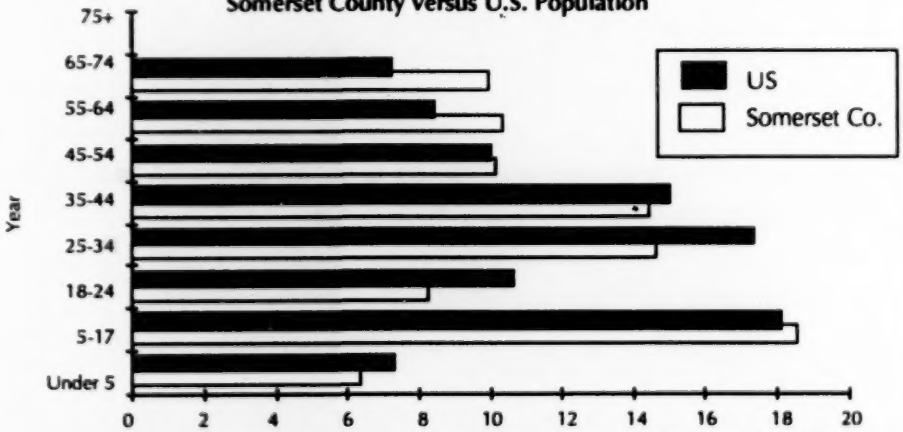
Like other rural counties, the educational level of the Somerset County workforce is relatively low. According to the 1990 Census, only sixty-nine percent of its residents twenty-five and older had completed high school (compared to seventy-five percent nationwide) and nine percent had completed college (compared to twenty percent nationwide). Part of this low educational achievement can be attributed to the county's high proportion of middle-aged and elderly residents (see figure 2.3). Since older groups are typically less educated than more recent generations, one can anticipate a discrepancy based on the age structure of the population alone. However, other forces are at work also. Even recent graduates show a lower propensity to pursue college degrees than residents elsewhere. Only 18.6 percent of Somerset County residents in the eighteen to twenty-four year age bracket was enrolled in college during 1990. This compares to thirty-six percent rate for Pennsylvania taken as a whole and is the seventeenth lowest among Pennsylvania counties.

Figure 2.2 Somerset County Per Capita Income, 1969-92 as percentage of U.S.



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 1994

Figure 2.3 Age Profile, 1990 Somerset County versus U.S. Population



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1994a

3.0 Survey Respondent Characteristics

Table 3.1 below shows the characteristics of the survey respondents. Whenever possible, the respondent sample is compared to all county establishments as revealed in the U.S. Census Bureau publication *County Business Patterns.* The second and third columns show that the private non-agricultural survey respondents were generally larger establishments than all private non-agricultural establishments operating in the county during 1992. Service establishments are over-represented in the sample, while trade (wholesale and retail), mining construction, and public utility establishments are underrepresented. Most respondents have been in operation at their present location for less than twenty years, and twenty-six percent reported having company locations outside of Somerset County. Only eight percent had union representation in the workplace. Sales for the responding firms were generally healthy. Almost half reported that sales had been rising steadily during the last two years. Only three percent indicated falling sales.

Table 3.1. Characteristics of survey respondents and all County establishments.

	Number	%	
Business age	**Respondents**		**% of County Establishments***
1-9	64	30	
10-19	50	24	
20-49	64	30	
50+	35	16	
Total	213	100	
Number of employees			
1-4	74	35	58
5-9	41	19	20
10-19	36	17	12
20-49	29	13	6
50+	34	16	4
Total	214	100	100
Industry			
Agriculture	(7)**	-	-
Mining	3	2	3
Construction	4	2	11
Transportation, Public Utility	7	2	7
Retail Trade	48	26	27
Wholesale Trade	4	2	6
Manufacturing	13	7	7
Services	104	57	32
Government	(5)**	-	-
Unclassified	(18)**	-	-
Total	213**	100	100

- Percentage of respondents with other business locations = 26%
- Percentage of respondents with labor unions = 8%
- Percent of establishments with sales levels that have:
  - grown steadily 49%
  - fallen steadily 3%
  - been stable 34%
  - been variable 15%

* *Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. 1994b.*

** *Industry excluded from percentage calculations.*

Source: Somerset County Employer Needs Assessment, 1996(Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 218 establishments.

Survey respondents rated themselves favorably in each of nine areas of business performance (see table 3.2). Quality control was viewed as the biggest strength followed by labor relations and management. Rated lower (but still above the industry average) were technology, marketing and sales, and diversification. When the responses of a sub-sample of thirteen Somerset County manufacturing establishments were compared to a benchmark group of West Virginia and Bedford County manufacturers, the Somerset County group usually rated itself lower (see figure 3.1). Only in the areas of quality control and workforce skills did Somerset County manufacturers rate themselves slightly higher than Bedford County manufacturers.

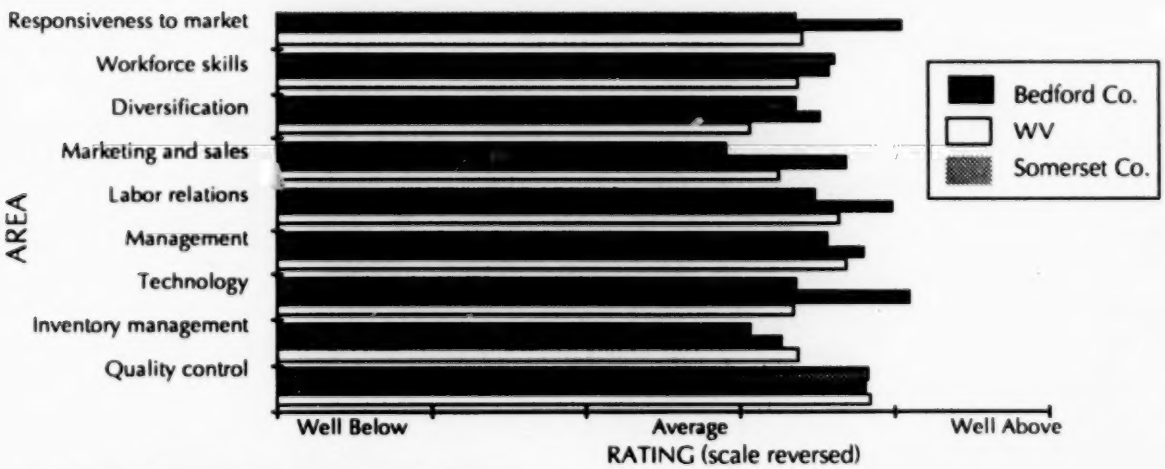
Table 3.2 Self-rating of business strengths relative to industry standards, percent of all respondents and mean rating*.

	Well above Average (1)	(2)	Industry Average (3)	(4)	Well Below Average (5)	Mean Rating
Quality control	37	38	23	1	1	1.90
Labor relations	27	37	33	1	2	2.13
Management	23	39	35	2	1	2.17
Workforce skills	22	34	40	3	1	2.26
Responsiveness to market	18	39	37	5	1	2.32
Inventory management	20	36	37	5	2	2.33
Technology	19	33	35	11	2	2.43
Diversification	15	30	45	9	1	2.50
Marketing and sales	15	30	43	11	1	2.54

Source: Somerset County Employer Needs Assessment, 1996 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 218 establishments.

**Mean rating refers to the average rating of a particular attribute by establishments based on the scale 1-5, ranging from (1) "well above average" to (5) "well below average."*

Figure 3.1 Manufacturers' Self-Rating
Somerset County versus Bedford County and West Virginia



Source: Somerset County Employer Needs Assessment, 1996; Bedford County Employer Needs Assessment, 1995; and Rephann and Shapira, 1993.

4.0 Workforce Characteristics

Somerset County businesses were asked to evaluate the importance of different methods of education and training to their operations (see table 4.1). Nearly nine out of ten establishments indicated that they used informal on-the-job training, and six out of ten employed formal in-company programs. Trade associations, including seminars conducted by these associations, were used by approximately half of the respondents, and one-third used televised computerized instruction. Employers were more likely to use state and local government agencies for upgrading worker skills than the local educational system, but federal assistance was relied upon even less. Less than five percent of the respondents indicated that they used high school, technical or community colleges, or four year colleges or universities on a regular basis, however.

Table 4.1 Sources of education and training, percent of all respondents.

	Do Not Use	Plan to Use	Used Sometimes	Used Often	Used*
Informal on-the-job	12	1	19	68	87
Formal in-company programs	34	6	36	24	60
Trade associations	51	3	32	14	46
Televised/computerized instruction	58	8	28	6	34
State and local government agencies	67	2	25	6	31
Apprenticeship programs	66	5	21	8	29
High school vocational education programs	69	4	26	2	28
Technical or community colleges in area	67	9	21	3	24
4-year colleges/universities	74	2	23	1	24
Technical or community colleges elsewhere	74	6	17	3	20
Federal agencies	77	3	19	1	20
High school non-vocational programs	85	3	11	1	12

Source: Somerset County Employer Needs Assessment, 1996 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College).
** The category labelled "used" is the sum of categories marked "used sometimes" and "used often."*

The average Somerset County employee, revealed in table 4.2, exhibits better educational achievement than the average County resident as revealed by the U.S. 1990 Census of Population (see table 4.2). On average, only three percent is without a high school degree or equivalent. Over forty percent of the employees has some post-secondary education or training, compared to over thirty percent of all county residents 25 years of age and older. Still, many firms indicated that they require a better prepared worker than is available in the area. Computer literacy is increasingly important. For the average respondent, half of its workforce must use a computer at least once a week. Trainability and the ability to learn on-the-job are also important. The average

establishment invests $200 per employee on worker training, but this is sometimes not enough for manpower needs. In open-ended comments, respondents indicated that the local workforce needs more preparation in the areas of computer technology and operation, business, writing and communication skills, and technical/mechanical skills.

Table 4.2 Employee education, age, and investment, percent of all respondents.

Median Education Attainment:	
Less than a high school diploma	3%
High school diploma	55%
Education towards technical or associate's degree	11%
Community College or technical school graduate	10%
Four Year College/University graduate	21%
Total	100%

Median age of employees = 35 years

Median amount spent on training each employee = $200

Median % of employees that uses a computer on job at least once a week=50%

Source: Somerset County Employer Needs Assessment, 1996 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 218 establishments.

Although respondents believe that workers could benefit from further education and training, they retain a generally favorable view of workforce quality (see table 4.3). Workers are regarded as reliable and loyal. They have good work skills and are trainable. Inititative, education, and leadership were rated lower but still "good."

Table 4.3 Employee Qualities, percent of total respondents and mean rating.

	Very Good (1)	Good (2)	Fair (3)	Poor (4)	Very Poor (5)	Mean Rating
Reliability	50	42	7	1	0	1.58
Loyalty	49	38	12	1	0	1.65
Attitude	39	47	13	1	1	1.77
Trainability	34	54	11	1	0	1.78
Work skills	34	52	14	0	0	1.80
Productivity	31	55	13	1	0	1.82
Adaptability	33	51	15	1	0	1.83
Initiative	28	47	21	4	0	2.01
Education	19	56	24	1	0	2.06
Leadership	21	45	27	6	1	2.21

Source: Somerset County Employer Needs Assessment, 1996 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 218 establishments.

5.0 Education and Training Needs

When asked about the areas in which workforce skills could be improved, Somerset County respondents stressed communication, computers, leadership, and management skills (see table 5.1). Basic skills such as computation, reading and writing, and math were ranked lower. Ranked particularly low were more specialized skills such as CAD/CAM computer training, technical operation skills, and maintenance/repair. Respondents reiterated in open-ended comments that communication and interpersonal skills are their foremost needs, followed in importance by basic computer literacy and a knowledge of technical areas pertinent to the firm.

Table 5.1 Labor Force Training Needs, percent of all respondents and mean rating.

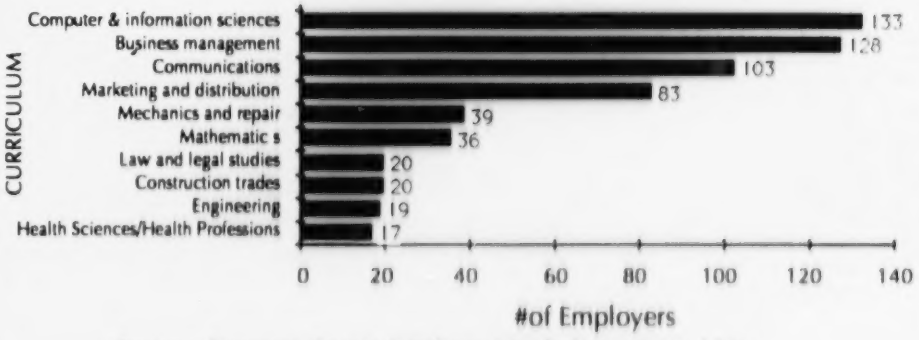
	All (1)	Most (2)	Some (3)	Few (4)	None (5)	Mean Rating
Communication skills	30	30	25	9	6	2.31
Computer training - business	26	26	23	14	6	2.56
Leadership skills	16	23	40	12	9	2.73
Group/interpersonal skills	19	26	27	15	13	2.79
Managerial skills	10	17	48	17	8	2.97
Computation skills	16	17	30	23	14	3.01
Marketing/sales	17	19	27	21	16	3.02
Finance/accounting/bookkeeping	9	13	32	36	10	3.25
Labor relations	8	14	29	22	27	3.48
Inventory control/purchasing	9	9	29	33	20	3.49
Reading and writing	11	11	28	19	31	3.50
Technical operator skills	6	16	24	29	25	3.50
Maintenance and repair	7	16	23	27	27	3.53
Computer training - CAD/CAM	5	11	20	23	41	3.85
Math/Engineering Skills	5	8	25	26	36	3.80
Other						

Source: Somerset County Employer Needs Assessment, 1996 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 218 establishments.

Many employers want and need college-level education for their workers. The college level curricula shown in figure 5.1 were identified by at least 15 respondents as likely to be beneficial to them in training current and future employees. Ten programs are shown. The ordering coincides with the needs revealed in the previous table. Some programs were supported by a broad spectrum of respondents. For instance, computer and information sciences was selected byone hundred and thirty-

three employers, followed by business management and marketing and distribution (128 and 83 respectively). Although respondents selected communications (103) and mathematics often (36), subsequent employer comments suggest that basic rather than college level education is needed in these areas. Other programs appeal to specific sectors of the economy. For instance, lawyers were likely to feel a need for law and legal studies programs, and health-related firms tended to indicate a need for coverage in the health career area.

Figure 5.1 Employer Curriculum Needs
Curricula cited by 15 or more employers



Source: Somerset County Employer Needs Assessment, 1996

6.0 Employee Recruitment and Availability

Somerset County employers use a variety of methods to recruit new employees (see table 6.1). Three-quarters rely on word of mouth. Local newspaper advertising is used by over half of the respondents. Public and private employment agencies are also popular. "Other" responses given included "signs," personal contact, and civil service announcements.

Almost five in ten of the respondents reported recruiting employees from local educational institutions, a higher rate than in Bedford County. For many students, the best opportunity to gain full-time entry-level work is through part-time work or internship. Each is used by Somerset County employers (see table 6.2). Over half of the firms offer opportunities for students to work part-time during the summer to gain job experience, and one in three offer student internships.

Table 6.1 Methods used to recruit new employees, percent of all respondents.

Word of mouth	74
Local newspaper advertising	52
Local job service	35
Recruiting at Educational Institution	17
Private employment agencies, temporary services, etc.	11
State or Region Wide Newspaper advertising	11
Other	17

Source: Somerset County Employer Needs Assessment, 1996 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 218 establishments.

Table 6.2
Opportunities offered to students, percent of all respondents.

	Do Not Use	Plan to Use	Used Sometimes	Used Often
Internships	63	5	26	6
Part-time summer employment	41	5	32	22
Company scholarships	88	1	6	5
Other				

Source: Somerset County Employer Needs Assessment, 1996 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 218 establishments.

Many employers reported difficulties in finding qualified applicants for skilled and professional level jobs (see table 6.3). Employers are only "sometimes" able to find qualified management and professional employees from the area. They are slightly more likely to find skilled and semi-skilled employees. In contrast, a majority of the firms reported that they were "always" or "often" able to find qualified clerical and unskilled employees.

Table 6.3 Ability to hire employees in different occupational groups from the region, percent of all respondents and mean rating.

	Always (1)	Often (2)	Sometimes (3)	Seldom (4)	Never (5)	NA	Mean Rating
Management	9	13	19	21	6	32	3.02
Professional employees	11	17	24	15	5	28	2.80
Skilled employees	14	18	30	14	4	20	2.70
Semi-skilled employees	16	30	23	7	3	21	2.37
Clerical employees	24	26	17	8	2	23	2.20
Unskilled employees	36	20	10	7	3	24	1.95

Source: Somerset County Employer Needs Assessment, 1996 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 218 establishments.

7.0 Local Educational Resources

Over one-quarter of the respondents reported having received assistance from a public or non-profit organization during the last two years (see table 7.1). This assistance usually was in the form of workforce training or business planning.

Table 7.1 Assistance received from programs in the last 2 years, percent of all respondents.

Received assistance from a program sponsored by federal, state, or local government, a non-profit corporation, or a university/college?	18
Types of assistance received:	
Training of workforce	11
Management assistance/business planning	6
Financing, loan assistance, or venture capital	4
Marketing of products, export assistance, or government procurement	2
Technology assistance, productivity improvement	2
Assistance with hazardous materials or safety	1
Other	2

Source: Somerset County Employer Needs Assessment, 1996 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 218 establishments.

Employers were asked to rate the quality of Somerset County schools divided into several functional categories (see table 7.2). Seven out of ten respondents indicated that the kindergarten and pre-schools were "good" or "very good." Employers were often unable to evaluate the Community College and Vocational school in the county, but when these schools were identified by name (see table 7.3), less than five percent still did not recognize them. On average, these institutions were rated between "good" and "fair" (see table 7.4). Secondary schools received slightly lower marks. Nearly three in ten respondents rated them as fair or poor.

Table 7.2. Somerset County school ratings, percent of all respondents and mean rating.

	Very Good (1)	Good (2)	Fair (3)	Poor (4)	Very Poor (5)	NA	Mean
Kindergarten/pre-schools	20	48	9	1	1	21	1.91
Primary schools	19	48	10	2	1	20	1.98
Community College	6	41	15	1	1	36	2.23
Vocational school	9	43	20	4	1	23	2.28
Secondary schools	11	42	22	5	2	18	2.31
Other							

Source: Somerset County Employer Needs Assessment, 1996 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 218 establishments.

Table 7.3. Recognition of ACC and Somerset Area Vocational-Technical School, percent of all respondents.

	ACC	Vo-Tech
Not previously heard of	5	3
Heard of, but not aware of the programs it offers	33	21
Aware of it and its programs	49	45
Aware of it and have had employees who attended or graduated.	13	31

Source: Somerset County Employer Needs Assessment, 1996 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 218 establishments.

Table 7.4 Ratings of ACC and Somerset County Vocational-Technical School, percent of all respondents.

	ACC	Vo-Tech
Excellent	10	9
Good	38	47
Fair	10	23
Poor	1	3
Don't know	41	18

Source: Somerset County Employer Needs Assessment, 1996 (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Allegany Community College). Based on responses from 218 establishments.

References

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APPENDIX A

Survey Instruments

CONFIDENTIAL ☐☐☐☐

SOMERSET COUNTY EMPLOYER NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Section A. Background Information

A1. In which year was this business/agency established? _____

A2. How many employees do you have in this business/agency? _____

A3. What industry best describes your business/agency? (Check single best answer)

- ☐Agriculture
- ☐Mining
- ☐Construction
- ☐Transportation
- ☐Communication/Utility
- ☐Retail Trade
- ☐Wholesale Trade/Distribution
- ☐Manufacturing
- ☐Services
- ☐Government
- ☐Other (Please describe) _____

A4. Is this the only location for your business/agency? ☐Yes ☐No

A5. Are workers at this business/agency unionized? ☐Yes ☐No

A6. How would you rate your business/agency strengths in the following areas relative to your industry average?

	Well above Average		Industry Average		Well Below Average
a. Quality control	1	2	3	4	5
b. Inventory management	1	2	3	4	5
c. Technology	1	2	3	4	5
d. Management	1	2	3	4	5
e. Labor relations	1	2	3	4	5
f. Marketing and sales	1	2	3	4	5
g. Diversification	1	2	3	4	5
h. Workforce skills	1	2	3	4	5
i. Responsiveness to market	1	2	3	4	5

A7. Over the past three years, sales/production levels at your business/agency have:
☐grown steadily ☐fallen steadily ☐been stable ☐been variable

Section B: Business Workforce Characteristics

B1. How often is each of the following sources of education and training used by your business/agency to improve the skills of its employees?

	Do Not Use	Plan to Use	Used Sometimes	Used Often
a. Informal on-the-job	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Formal in-company programs	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. High school vocational education programs	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. High school non-vocational programs	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Technical or community colleges in area	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Technical or community colleges elsewhere	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. 4-year colleges/universities	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Televised/computerized instruction	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Apprenticeship programs	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. State and local government agencies	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Federal agencies	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Trade associations	☐	☐	☐	☐

m. Other (please describe) _____

B2. Please estimate how much your business/agency spent during the past year on training employees?

$ _____ per employee

B3. Approximately what percentage of your employees have the following kinds of education?

Less than a high school diploma	_____%
High school diploma	_____%
Education towards technical or associate degree	_____%
Community College or technical school graduate	_____%
Four Year College/University graduate	_____%

B4. What percentage of your employees use a computer on the job at least once a week? _____%

B5. How would you rate your employees in the following areas?

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
a. Attitude	1	2	3	4	5
b. Productivity	1	2	3	4	5
c. Leadership	1	2	3	4	5
d. Work skills	1	2	3	4	5
e. Education	1	2	3	4	5
f. Reliability	1	2	3	4	5
g. Loyalty	1	2	3	4	5
h. Initiative	1	2	3	4	5
i. Trainability	1	2	3	4	5
j. Adaptability	1	2	3	4	5
k. Other (please describe) _____					

B6. What is the approximate average age of your employees? _____

Section C: Education and Training Needs

C1. What portion of your workforce would benefit from further education and training in the following areas?

	All	Most	Some	Few	None
a. Computation skills	1	2	3	4	5
b. Computer training - business	1	2	3	4	5
c. Computer training - CAD/CAM	1	2	3	4	5
d. Math/engineering skills	1	2	3	4	5
e. Group/interpersonal skills	1	2	3	4	5
f. Managerial skills	1	2	3	4	5
g. Labor relations	1	2	3	4	5
h. Communication skills	1	2	3	4	5
i. Technical operator skills	1	2	3	4	5
j. Maintenance and repair	1	2	3	4	5
k. Reading and writing	1	2	3	4	5
l. Marketing/sales	1	2	3	4	5
m. Finance/accounting/bookkeeping	1	2	3	4	5
n. Inventory control/purchasing	1	2	3	4	5
o. Leadership skills	1	2	3	4	5
p. Other (please describe) _____					

Section D: Employee Recruitment and Availability

D1. To what extent are you able to hire skilled employees in the following occupational groups from the region when you need them?

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	NA
a. Management	1	2	3	4	5	0
b. Professional employees	1	2	3	4	5	0
c. Clerical employees	1	2	3	4	5	0
d. Skilled employees	1	2	3	4	5	0
e. Semi-skilled employees	1	2	3	4	5	0
f. Unskilled employees	1	2	3	4	5	0

D2. Which of the following methods does your business/agency use to recruit new employees? (Check all that apply)

- ❑Word of mouth
- ❑Private employment agencies, temporary services, etc.
- ❑Local job service
- ❑Local newspaper advertising
- ❑State or region wide newspaper advertising
- ❑Recruiting at educational institution
- ❑Other (please describe)_____

D3. How often does your business/agency offer the following opportunities to students from the Somerset County area?

	Do Not Use	Plan to Use	Used Sometimes	Used Often
a. Internships	❑	❑	❑	❑
b. Part-time summer employment	❑	❑	❑	❑
c. Scholarships	❑	❑	❑	❑
d. Other (please describe) _____				

D4. Please specify any special skills or areas of knowledge that you feel a person should have in order to qualify for jobs in your business/agency.

_____

_____

_____

Section E: Local Educational Resources

E1. In the last 2 years, has your business/agency received assistance from a program sponsored by federal, state, or local government, a non-profit corporation, or a university/college?

❑Yes ❑No ❑Don't know

If YES: Please indicate the types of assistance received. Check one or more as appropriate.

- a. Management assistance/business planning ❑
- b. Training of workforce ❑
- c. Financing, loan assistance, or venture capital ❑
- d. Marketing of products, export assistance, or government procurement ❑
- e. Assistance with hazardous materials or safety ❑
- f. Technology assistance, productivity improvement ❑
- g. Other (please describe) _____

E2. How would you rate the quality of Somerset County schools in each of the following areas?

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	NA/ Don't Know
a. Kindergarten/pre-schools	1	2	3	4	5	0
b. Primary schools	1	2	3	4	5	0
c. Secondary schools	1	2	3	4	5	0
d. Vocational school	1	2	3	4	5	0
e. Community College	1	2	3	4	5	0
f. Other (please describe) _____						

E3. How much do you know about the Allegany Community College Center in Somerset County? Please check the box that best describes your knowledge of the College.

- ❑ Not previoulsy heard of
- ❑ Heard of, but not aware of the programs it offers
- ❑ Aware of it and its programs
- ❑ Aware of it and have had employees who attended or graduated

E4. If you have heard of Allegany Community College, how would you rate the quality of education provided?

❑ Excellent ❑ Good ❑ Fair ❑ Poor ❑ Don't know

E5. Listed below are programs which community colleges offer. Please indicate which programs would be useful to your business/agency in training current and future employees. (Check all that apply)

- ❑ Agricultural business and production
- ❑ Agricultural sciences
- ❑ Architecture and planning
- ❑ Area, ethnic and cultural studies
- ❑ Business management
- ❑ Communications
- ❑ Computer and information sciences
- ❑ Conservation/renewable natural resources
- ❑ Construction trades
- ❑ Education
- ❑ Engineering
- ❑ Engineering technologies
- ❑ English language and literature
- ❑ Foreign languages and literatures
- ❑ Health sciences/health professions
- ❑ Home economics
- ❑ Law and legal studies
- ❑ Library sciences
- ❑ Life sciences/biological sciences
- ❑ Marketing and distribution
- ❑ Mathematics
- ❑ Mechanics and repair
- ❑ Military technologies
- ❑ Multi-interdisciplinary studies
- ❑ Parks, recreation, and leisure
- ❑ Personal services
- ❑ Philosophy,religion,and theology
- ❑ Physical sciences
- ❑ Precision production trades
- ❑ Protective services
- ❑ Psychology
- ❑ Public administration
- ❑ Social sciences and history
- ❑ Transport and materials moving
- ❑ Other (please describe) _____

E6. Please describe how Allegany Community College's Somerset County Center can better help you with the training of future employees.

_____

_____

E7. How much do you know about the Somerset County Area Vocational-Technical School? Please check the box that best describes your knowledge of the College.

- ❑Not previoulsy heard of
- ❑Heard of, but not aware of the programs it offers
- ❑Aware of it and its programs
- ❑Aware of it and have had employees who attended or graduated

E8. If you are familiar with the Somerset County Area Vocational-Technical School, how would you rate the quality of education provided?

❑ Excellent ❑ Good ❑ Fair ❑ Poor ❑ Don't know

E9. Please describe how the Somerset County Area Vocational-Technical School can better help you with the training of future employees.

_____

_____

E10. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your education and training needs, any problems you have had recruiting qualified employees, or ways in which local education or training could help your firm?

_____

_____

E11. Are you aware of the state-funded customized job training or work-force education available through:
(1) Somerset County Area Vocational Technical School? ❑Yes ❑No
(2) Allegany Community College? ❑Yes ❑No

E12. Would you like to be contacted for further discussion of your educational and training needs?

- ❑Yes, Allegany Community College
- ❑Yes, Somerset County area Vo-Tech
- ❑No

If yes, contact person: _____ Telephone: _____

Thank you for your help.
Please place the completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope and mail.